BOROUGH OF BURY ST. EDMUND'S.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

1923.

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I.—GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area—2934 Acres.
Population—16,060.
Inhabited Houses—3802.
Number of Families or Separate Occupiers—3854.
Rateable Value—£72,111. £24 per acre, or £4 10s. per head of population.
Sum represented by 1d. Rate—£273.

II.—VITAL STATISTICS.

		M.	F.	Total.	
Births ...	Legitimate ...	158	119	277	Birth Rate—18.30.
	Illegitimate ...	10	7	17	
Deaths ...	... ...	81	100	181	Death Rate—11.27.

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of Childbirth — From Sepsis ... 0; „ other causes ... 0

Deaths of Infants under 1 year—Legitimate, 9; Illegitimate, 2.

Rate per 1,000 Births—35.48.

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) 1
Deaths from Diarrhœa (under two years of age) 0

III.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

DISEASE.		TOTAL CASES.	ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL.	DEATHS.
Measles		235	0	1
German Measles		11	0	0
Diphtheria...		3	2	1
Scarlet Fever		3	3	0
Enteric Fever and Para-Typhoid ...		0	0	0
Pneumonia (all forms)		4	0	4
Puerperal Fever		1	0	0
Erysipelas		10	0	0
Chicken Pox (5 months)		30	0	0
Small Pox		0	0	0
Tuberculosis—				
(a) Pulmonary	M.	7	0	9
	F.	17	0	8
	Total	24	0	17
(b) Non-Pulmonary	M. ...	4	0	2
	F. ...	5	0	4
	Total	9	0	6
Ophthalmia Neonatorum		2	0	0

Zymotic Death Rate ... ... 0.18.

The age periods for deaths from Tuberculosis were :—

(a) *Pulmonary.*—20 to 35 years, 2; 35 to 45, 6; 45 to 65, 8; over 65, 1.
(b) *Non-Pulmonary.*—1 to 2 years, 1; 2 to 3, 1; 3 to 4, 1; 20 to 35, 3.

IV.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

The Autumn and Winter witnessed a very extensive outbreak of Measles, the course of which was of great interest.

The first cases notified occurred about ten days before the Schools closed for the Summer holiday, and occurred among children at the Eastgate Infants' School. Enquiry showed that these had been infected by two earlier cases among children living at Eldo Cottages, an isolated, outlying group of dwellings, the children from which attend the Eastgate School. These cases were, unfortunately, not notified owing to an oversight. Had they been, it would have been easy to exclude the whole of the children from this area, and it is possible the outbreak might have been arrested. Once the disease became established in the crowded centre of the Borough it spread with great steadiness and some rapidity. On the re-opening of the Schools it was well established in the east and there were already some cases in the south; thence it travelled west, north-west, and then eastwards to the centre, carrying the whole of the north with it. In all 250 cases were notified, 246 by Medical Practitioners and the remainder by parents. It was interesting that the epidemic ended where it had begun, and that the attendance at the Eastgate School, which had risen after its first fall and remained fairly steady while the rest of the Schools were suffering, fell to its lowest level just before the Christmas holidays. This suggests that children who had withstood infection for two or three months yielded to a re-invasion from outside under the adverse influence of one of the most trying winters on record. Only one death occurred, in a child that was said to have been very delicate from birth. Under the circumstances of this outbreak the value of the compulsory notification of measles has yet to be proved. It would appear that, once the disease has become established, notification alone is of no use as a preventive measure, for every case was followed up and rigid exclusion of all susceptible contacts was enforced. Apart from this and the effects of the severe Autumn and Winter on people over 65 years of age, the year stands out as a singularly healthy one. There were only 11 deaths of infants under a year old, and 98—rather more than half of the total number—of persons over 65.

V.—NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, &c.

(*a*) *General.* The Suffolk County Nursing Association supplies three Nurses, who reside in the Borough. Their services are obtained on payment of small fees arranged to scale, and are also available for insured persons by arrangements through Approved Societies, and for Poor Law cases recommended by the District Medical Officers, the Guardians paying an annual retainer for this purpose.

(*b*) *Infectious Diseases.* Professional nursing of these cases in the home is not provided for. The School Nurses visit the home in every case affecting a School child, and are frequently able to advise as to feeding and general management.

(*c*) *The County Council* has control over (1) Midwives. (2) Maternity and Child Welfare. (3) Tuberculosis. (4) Venereal Diseases.

(*d*) *School Clinic.* The premises at 5, Cornhill, have been fully described in previous Reports, and the year's work detailed in that of the S.M.O.

(*e*) *Fever.* The Borough Isolation Hospital, Out Southgate, has 20 beds, with facilities for separating Enteric, Scarlet Fever, and Diphtheria. It is in charge of a fever-trained Matron, and is under the supervision of the M.O.H., who is responsible for treatment. A suggestion has been made to allocate beds to two neighbouring Authorities which have no Isolation Hospital, and negotiations to this end are at present in progress.

(*f*) *Children.* The Alexandra Home, Northgate Street, is maintained by the Board of Guardians for about 24 homeless children. It was reported on last year as unsuitable for its purpose. The erection of a new Home was also stated to be under consideration. The Home was then used solely to house children of school age. Since then younger children of two or three years old have been admitted. The Home has been definitely condemned by H. M. Inspector and the M.O.H., but there appears, at present, no prospect of more suitable premises being provided. The general outcome of repeated discussions appears to be that the Home, which it is admitted has always been a failure, "can" be emptied in three months. Whether it *will* be remains to be seen. The subject will not rest where it is.

(g) The West Suffolk General Hospital contains approximately 100 beds, and is supported by voluntary contributions conferring the Letter system and a payment of 10s. a week by In-patients. During 1923 there were 973 In-patients, of which two-thirds were surgical cases (emergencies, 97), and 2,390 Out-patients. There are special departments for Orthopædic Surgery and diseases of the Nose and Throat; also an X-ray installation, and a resident Pathologist. The Hospital provides a very large amount of skilled treatment and care to needy cases, and is of inestimable value to the town and district.

(*h*) *Small-Pox.* The Hospital, Hardwick Road, consists of huts specially constructed for the purpose in 1902. It has accommodation for 40 cases and the requisite staff, and can be brought into use in a few hours.

(*i*) *Ambulances.* *(1) Infectious Diseases.* A horsed Ambulance is kept at the Isolation Hospital and removes cases without charge.

(*2*) *General.* A motor Ambulance is maintained by the British Red Cross Society, the usual fees being charged for its use.

VI.—LABORATORY WORK.

Throat swabs are examined by the County Medical Officer. Sputum, blood, cerebro-spinal fluid and excreta are examined, when required, through the M.O.H.

Diphtheria anti-Toxin is supplied free on the application of a Medical Practitioner.

VII.—LOCAL ACTS, BYE-LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

The following relating to the Public Health are in force :—

Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890.
Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890.
Private Street Works Act, 1892.
Public Libraries Act, 1892.
Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907.

Bye-laws are also in force to regulate the following matters :—

New Buildings.
New Streets and Drainage.
Slaughter-houses.
Common Lodging Houses.
Markets.
Cleansing of Roads, Footways, &c.
Prevention of Nuisances from Snow, Dust, Rubbish, &c.
The Employment of Children and Young Persons.
Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops.
School Attendance.
Street Cries and other Nuisances.
Hackney Carriages.
Control of Dogs at night time.
Rear Lights on Vehicles.
Pleasure Grounds.

VIII.—SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Slaughter Houses. Thirteen, licensed annually.

Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops. Fifteen, registered.

The Sanitary Inspector is specially paid for their supervision.

Offensive Trades. Nil. One gut-scraper's premises closed during the year.

Disinfection. (1). By Washington-Lyons Steam Disinfector at the Isolation Hospital.

(2). Formalin Spray or Fumigation for dwellings.

These are employed in every case of Notifiable Infectious Disease.

Closets converted to W.C.'s, 15. Number remaining, 35 (approximately).

Analysis of Food.

	Genuine.	Adulterated.	Remarks.
New Milk	15	3	2 samples, under 3% of milk fat. Warned. 1 sample, 15¼% of added water. Prosecuted and fined £3.
Butter	5	0	
Cream	1	0	No preservative.
Margarine	2	0	
Lard	1	0	
Condensed Skimmed Milk ...	2	0	
Vinegar	1	0	
Pepper	1	0	
Total	28	3	

Milk and Cream Regulations.

1.—Milk and Cream not sold as Preserved Cream.

(*a*) Number of Samples examined for the presence of a Preservative—Milk, 18. Cream, 1.

(*b*) Number in which Preservative was reported—0.

2.—Cream sold as Preserved Cream—Nil.

3.—Thickening Substances—Nil.

IX.—PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

(1) *Medical Officer of Health.*—Part time ; is also School Medical Officer and District Medical Officer.

(2) *Sanitary Inspector.*—Whole time. Specially qualified to inspect meat.

Both the above receive a contribution to their salaries from the Exchequer.

(3) *Matron of Isolation Hospital.*—Whole time, and fully trained in Fever Hospital Routine.

(4) *School Nurse.*—Whole time and fully trained.

(5) *Assistant School Nurse.*—Whole time. Probationer.

The last two assist in domiciliary visiting for following up contacts in cases of Infectious Disease.

X.—HOUSING.

(*a*) Number of new houses erected. (Total)—2.

(*b*) As part of Municipal Housing Scheme—24 in course of erection.

1.—*Unfit Dwelling Houses.*

Inspection. (1) Total number of houses inspected for housing defects (Public Health or Housing Acts) 196

(2) Total number of houses inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 140

(3) Number of Houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 1

(4) Number of houses found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 171

2.—*Remedy of Defects with Service of Formal Notices.*

Number of defective houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers 39

3.—*Action under Statutory Powers.*

A.—Proceedings under Sect. 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 0

(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit :—

(*a*) By Owners 0

(*b*) By Local Authority in default of Owners 0

(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by Owners of intention to close ... 0

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 177

(2) Number of dwelling houses in defects were remedied :—

(*a*) By Owners 140

(*b*) By Local Authority in default of Owners 0

C.—Proceedings under Sect. 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to Closing Orders 0

(2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... 0

(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit 0

(4) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 0

(5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... 0

Fifty (50) dwelling houses have been let on the Grove Park Site. Number of occupants, 164 ; average per house, 3.2.

The Borough Surveyor controls the care of these houses.

XI.—VITAL STATISTICS.

Causes of Deaths in Bury St. Edmund's during the year 1923.

	Causes of Death—Civilians only.	M.	F.
	All Causes	81	100
1.	Enteric Fever	—	—
2.	Small Pox	—	—
3.	Measles	1	—
4.	Scarlet Fever	—	—
5.	Whooping Cough	—	1
6.	Diphtheria	—	1
7.	Influenza	3	2
8.	Encephalitis Lethargica ...	—	—
9.	Meningococcal Meningitis ...	—	—
10.	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	9	8
11.	Other Tuberculous Diseases ...	2	4
12.	Cancer, Malignant Disease ...	13	11
13.	Rheumatic Fever	1	—
14.	Diabetes	1	1
15.	Cerebral Hæmorrhage, &c. ...	5	6
16.	Heart Disease	13	11
17.	Arterio-Sclerosis	8	10
18.	Bronchitis	4	13
19.	Pneumonia (all forms) ...	2	2
20.	Other Respiratory Diseases ...	—	5
21.	Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum...	—	—

Causes of Death—Civilians only.	M.	F.
22.—Diarrhœa, &c. (under 2 years) ...	—	—
23.—Appendicitis and Typhlitis ...	1	—
24.—Cirrhosis of Liver	—	—
25.—Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...	2	6
26.—Puerperal Sepsis	—	—
27.—Other Accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition ...	—	—
28.—Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth ...	4	5
29.—Suicide	—	—
30.—Other Deaths from Violence ...	1	1
31.—Other Defined Diseases ...	10	12
32.—Causes Ill-defined or unknown ..	1	1
Special Causes (included above)—		
Poliomyelitis	—	—
Polioencephalitis	—	—
Deaths of Infants under 1 year { Total	5	6
Deaths of Infants under 1 year { Illegitimate ...	1	1
Total Births	168	126
Legitimate	158	119
Illegitimate	10	7
Population	16,060.	

Uncertified Deaths.—Four.

(1) Bronchitis and Heart Failure.

(2) Heart Failure due to Valvular Disease.

(3) Natural Causes, Syncope caused by Senile Cardio-Valvular Degeneration.

(4) Senile Decay, Heart Failure.

Inquests.—Six.

In three cases :—"Natural Causes."

(4) "Wounds accidentally received from falling through a roof; broken ribs; concussion of brain."

(5) "Suicide by throwing himself against a train."

(6) "Fracture of skull caused by fall from a cart due to accidental collision."

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

There are 194 premises under this heading, of which 13 are Factories, viz. :—

Mineral Waters	2
Iron Works	2
Stays	1
Clothing	2
Factory Laundries	2
Maltings	4

The remainder consist mainly of Cycle Workshops, Garages, Upholsterers' and Furniture Repair Shops, Basket Makers' Premises, Workshop Laundries, Dressmakers' and Boot-repairers' Shops.

They are all regularly inspected, and their condition as regards sanitation, cleanliness, lighting, ventilation and repair is, generally speaking, good. Attention has also been given to the means of fire control and emergency exits.

A general survey of the year suggests that, while economically the Borough has borne its proportion of the general unemployment and depression which have prevailed recently, the physical welfare of its people has been well maintained. The number of persons who received Out-door Relief were :—Men 390, Women 342, Children 621, a total of 1,353, or .8 per cent. The corresponding figures for In-door Relief were :—Men 87, Women 59, Children 57, giving a total of 203. There were, besides, admitted to the Casual Wards at the Union, and classified by the Police as "Vagrants," Men 3,809, Women 159, and Children 23, a total of 3,991. This represents a very fair share of the dangers besetting a community surrounded by and infiltrated with want and distress. Yet the Death-rate (11·27) and the Infant Mortality Rate (35·48 per 1000 births) were the lowest on record. These figures may be expected to show still further improvement when the greatest of all social needs—adequate housing accommodation for all—has been supplied. The Water Supply continues, as it has always been, of unexceptionable purity, nor has there been any shortage. The sewerage and drainage have, owing to the low level and the small outfall, caused local anxieties after exceptionally heavy rains, but may be regarded as satisfying the normal requirements, both meteorological and social. The town is generally noticeable for the cleanliness of its thoroughfares and the brightness of its open spaces. Its varied interests—architectural, historical and literary—attract many visitors within its gates, and those who are charged with the safety of its traditions and the welfare of its people are unlikely to be unmindful of their inheritance.

SUMMARY.

The following Table contains an abstract of particulars taken from the Inspector's Books :—

Number of Visits paid 2523

Nuisances Dealt With.

Defective w.c.'s	6
Keeping of Animals so as to be a nuisance	4
Overcrowding	2
Accumulation of Refuse	6
Dirty Walls and Ceilings	5
Defective Walls and Ceilings .:. ...	117
D and Bell Traps abolished	30
Defective Drains	5
Blocked Drains	7
Dirty Condition of Bakehouses ...	1
Dirty Condition of Slaughterhouses ...	1
Dirty Condition of Cowsheds	1
Defective Floors	68
Defective Roofs	59
Defective Troughing and Rain-water Pipes	38
Defective Paving in Yards	41
Damp Walls and Floors	15
Dirty w.c.'s	4
Sink Wastes, Defects of	2
Defective Window Frames	39
Dirty Condition of House and Bedding ...	1
Insufficient Drainage	12
Insufficient Lighting and Ventilation ...	5
Insufficient w.c.'s	17
New w.c.'s	17
Houses without a proper supply of water ...	2
Number of Premises Stripped and Cleansed after Infectious Disease	2
Miscellaneous	73
Number of Complaints received	43
Verbal Notices given	41
Preliminary Notices	21
Statutory Notices	79
Visits for Infectious Diseases	64
Houses Disinfected	41
Samples under Sale of Food and Drugs Act	31
Visits to Bakehouses	93
Visits to Milkshops	47
Visits to Slaughterhouses	484
Meat and other Foodstuffs Condemned as Unfit for Human Consumption	1250 lbs.

F. G. Pawsey & Co., Ltd., Printers, Bury.